

## **Hebrew 10, Introduction to Hebrew Culture**

Lewis Glinert, Spring 2004, 10A

Office: 305 Bartlett Hall Office hours: Tu, Th 1-2

### Description

The Hebrew language has had a unique spiritual hold on both the Jewish and Christian imagination. Transmitted unbroken across more than three millennia, this is the oldest literary heritage in use today. You will first sample Israelite poetry and narrative -- in translation but with a taste of the original -- and then the Midrash and Talmud of the ancient Rabbis, the astonishing creativity of the Jewish Diaspora, and the flowering of a new Israeli culture. Alongside, we trace the origins of the Hebrew alphabet; the 'death' of spoken Hebrew and the often stormy relationship between written Hebrew and Yiddish or other Jewish languages, climaxing in the attempted linguacide of Hebrew by the Soviets; the quest for spiritual significance in the letters and language, and the emergence in the Renaissance of a Christian Hebraism that left a profound mark on Colonial America and its Ivy League colleges. The course also explores a modern mystery: Modern Israeli Hebrew, the only known case of a language reborn.

No knowledge of Hebrew is assumed.

### To purchase

1. Coursepack
2. Hoffman, Edward. 'The Hebrew alphabet', Chronicle Books: San Francisco, 1998
3. The Soul of the Text: An anthology of Jewish Literature. Chicago: Great Books Foundation, 2000
4. Chomsky, W. Hebrew: The Eternal Language (photocopy)

### To listen to

(on the Dartmouth Jewish Sound Archive, [www.dartmouth.edu/~djsa](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~djsa))

Glinert, Tongue of Tongues  
Cantillation of the Torah

### To view

The Wordmaker (video about Ben Yehuda )

### Reserve list

Barnavi, E. A historical atlas of the Jewish people, Knopf 1992

Chomsky, W. Hebrew: The Eternal Language, JPS 1957.

De Lange, N. The Illustrated History of the Jewish People

Hoffman, Edward. The Hebrew alphabet, Chronicle Books: San Francisco, 1998

Kaplan, Aryeh (ed) Sefer Yetzirah. York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser Inc. 1990.

Malino, Frances and David Sorkin (eds) From East and West : Jews in a changing Europe, 1750-1870 Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991

Ouaknin, M-Alain. Mysteries of the Alphabet. Abbeville Press: NY, 1999

The Soul of the Text: An anthology of Jewish Literature. Chicago, 2000

Recommended URLs:

Jewish history: <http://www.us-israel.org/jsource/History/timeline.html>

### **Course requirement**

There will be three final essays (50% of the grade), and several assignments and quizzes (50% of the grade).

### **Late Work**

Unless permission is granted by the instructor well in advance of the deadline, late essays or papers will be penalized a minimum of one letter grade rank (i.e. a “B” will automatically be reduced to a “B-”).

**Academic Honor Principle**

Review the pertinent section in the Student Handbook and carefully read Sources: Their Use and Acknowledgement. In terms of this course, students should make every effort to acknowledge any ideas or information they obtained from outside sources.

**Disabilities Statement**

I encourage students with disabilities, including "invisible" disabilities like chronic diseases, learning disabilities, and psychiatric disabilities to discuss with me after class or during my office hours appropriate accommodations that might be helpful to them. Also, they should stop by the Academic Skills Center in 301 Collis Center to register for support services. Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me by the end of the second week of the term. All discussions will remain confidential.

**The Composition Center Web Site**

The Composition Center Web site is a textbook-quality site that provides students with advice on all stages of the writing and researching processes. Please visit [www.dartmouth.edu/~compose](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~compose)

## Syllabus

### **Week 1 3000 years of Hebrew**

Chomsky 1-13

Barnavi 18-19

Glinert (radio documentary) Tongue of Tongues

### **Week 2 The Hebrew Bible**

Alter 'Introduction to the Old Testament' in Alter & Kermode, 1-35

#### **Selections from the Bible:**

Fox edition (coursepack): Genesis ch. 1, Exodus ch. 20, Numbers ch. 24

Ruth ch 1

Isaiah ch 1

Psalms ch. 1-3, 104

Proverbs ch. 31

Holtz 31-127

### **Week 3 The dawn of Hebrew**

Chomsky 17-69

Halpern (BAR article)

Chomsky 73-92

Cross p 77-90 (coursepack)

### **Week 4 Hebrew's near-death experience**

Chomsky 139-183

Spolsky, 95-109 (coursepack)

## **Week 5 Hebrew literature down the centuries**

The Soul of the Text. pp 10-11, 24-28, 48-55, 67-95  
Leviant 137-141, 415-447, 458-476, 521-526 (coursepack)  
Scheidlin 53-57 (coursepack)  
Carmi 353-5, 386-7, 505-6 (coursepack)  
De Lange 116-121

## **Week 6 Hebrew, Jewish learning and spirituality**

Idel "Language and Kabbalah", 42-72 (coursepack)  
Kaplan [**hand out**]  
Hoffman. 'The Hebrew alphabet  
Dan 'The language of creation and its grammar' 42-63 (coursepack)

Cantillation (recording)

Stampfer 'What did "knowing Hebrew" mean in E. Europe?' 129-137 (coursepack)  
Loewenthal 'Hebrew and the Habad communication ethos' 167-187 (coursepack)

## **Week 7**

### **Jewish learning and spirituality (continued)**

Strassfeld, pp 183-209 [**hand out**]  
Glinert 'Hebrew as quasilect' 249-264 (coursepack)

### **Hebrew and Christendom**

Chomsky 245-250  
Lapide 1-6 (coursepack)  
Goldman 3-13, 70-85, 201-227 (coursepack)  
Hay, 58-67 (coursepack)

## **Week 8 The rebirth of a Modern mother-tongue**

Chomsky 231-244  
Greenbaum 242-246 (coursepack)  
Glinert 'The back-to-the-future syndrome in Language Planning', 215-243

The Wordsmith (video)

Harshav 81-100 (coursepack)  
Fishman 'Cartoons about language' 151-165 (coursepack)  
Band 'Hebrew in the American University' 171-186 (coursepack)

## **Week 9 A thoroughly modern culture**

The Soul of the Text. pp 190-252

Miron, Dan, p.49-69 (coursepack)  
Mendele Mocher Sforim 'Shem and Japheth on the Train' 15-38 (coursepack)

Oz 'Before his time' 329-350 (coursepack)  
Liebrecht 'A room on the roof' 231-258 (coursepack)

## **Week 10**

Wrap-up. Did Hebrew ever die?

### **Final essays**

Each essay to be 1200-1400 words.

1. Did Hebrew ever die?
2. How and why was Hebrew modernized?
3. Compare how the relationship between the Jewish and the outside world is portrayed in the Hebrew stories you've read